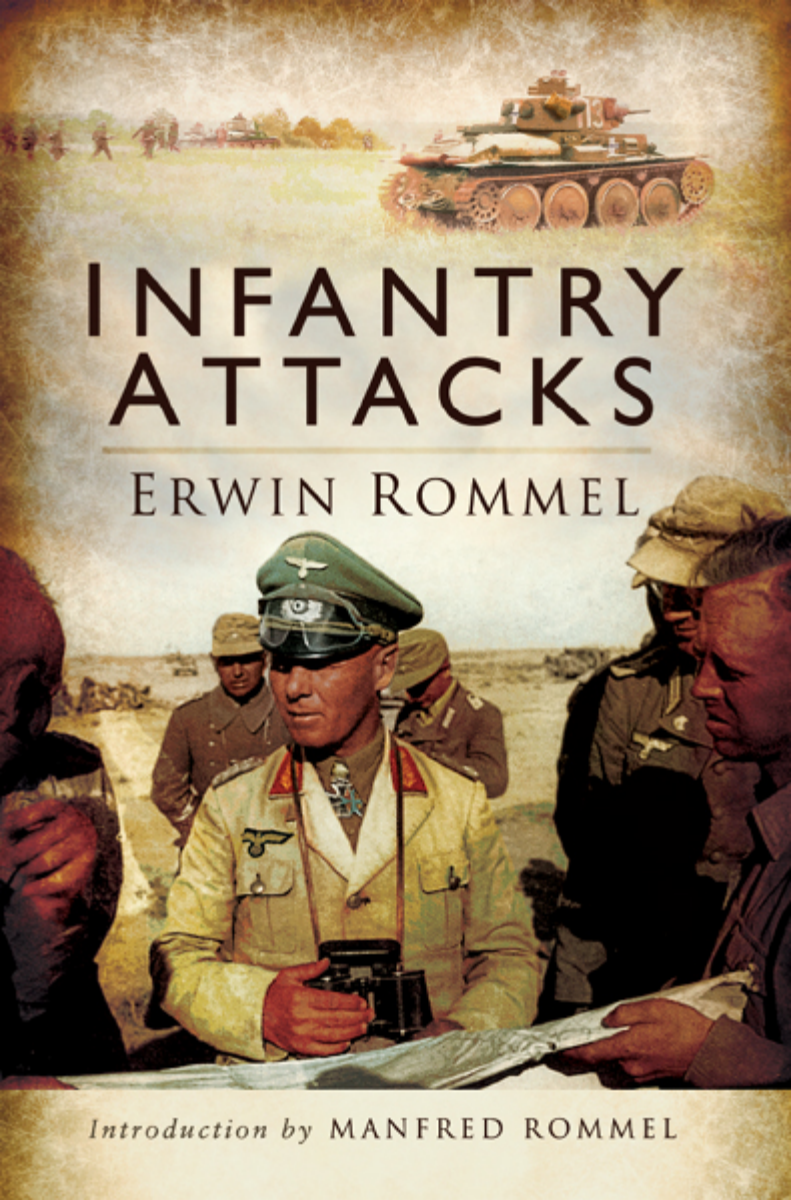
INFANTRY
ATTACKS
ERWIN ROMMEL
Introduction by MANFRED ROMMEL

Infantry Attacks

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III: OPEN WARFARE IN RUMANIA AND THE CARPATHIANS, 1917

INTRODUCTION TO NEW EDITION

BY MANFRED ROMMEL

My father wrote *Infantry Attacks* (*Infanterie Greift an*) in the first half of the 1930s. It was intended as a textbook for the infantry and in it my father drew on his own experiences as an infantry officer during the First World War. Anyone who reads it will notice that my own future existence was repeatedly and seriously in danger, for my father only survived the battles he was in by sheer luck. Had he not done so, I would not have been born in 1928. My father, incidentally, said once that in order to become a hero one must above all survive. Later on, I found this same thought expressed in the works of Elias Canetti.

From my early childhood, as soon as I began to be aware of the world around me, I knew my father was a hero. Everybody said so; nobody doubted it. That would not have been possible in any case, as my father had been awarded the highest and very rare Prussian order for valour *'Pour le Mérite'*, in the famous shape of a blue Maltese cross, and established by Frederick the Great. The French name for the award made many of my compatriots uneasy at a time when most Germans only dealt with their French neighbours over gunsights. I remember some building labourers who considered me, then aged four, to be the correct fount of knowledge on why my father's medal had such a suspicious French name. Nevertheless, this order was regarded by people at that time with the same respect we would now accord the Nobel Prize. When my parents were out, I used to take my father's medals out of the drawer, pin them on my chest and look at myself in the mirror: unquestionably a most impressive sight.

At that time my father was living in Goslar, in the Hartz mountains, as commander of a *Jägerbataillon* (literally: hunter battalion), which during the Napoleonic Wars, had been in the service of the King of England in the conquest of Gibraltar. This battalion consisted mostly of descendants of foresters, who only respected a man if he was a hunter. So my father had no choice but to qualify as a hunter and to adorn his home with horns and antlers of the beasts he had shot. He removed all our ancestors' portraits and used the wall space for his trophies. He would even have removed the pictures of my mother and myself and substituted trophies instead, had he not encountered strong opposition from the family.

I have always been extremely fond of my father, because he was a warm-hearted person, because he devoted a great deal of time to me, because he even listened to me and declared me to be intelligent, and because he was an inventive and imaginative story-teller of both fact and fiction.

In this book, however, nothing is fiction. Easily though it reads, it is the result of self-criticism. My father was a good mathematician, and as a mathematician he was used to doubting conceptions and views. He submitted his own actions to his critical judgement, and considered that only through self-criticism and continuous evaluation of experiences had he become a good tactician and qualified military leader. So, after the First World War, he devoted a great deal of time to critical study of the operations in which he had been involved and the battles in which he had commanded. He made enquiries of other officers and soldiers and carefully evaluated the information he received. With my mother, he even visited, on a motorbike, the part of Italy where he had stayed during the war, taking hundreds of photographs and making sketches. It goes without saying that my father did not indicate his profession on the passport he used for the trip as 'military commander' but as 'engineer,' in order to avoid any unpleasant memories for the Italians.

During the Second World War, too, my father tried always to record his adventures and experiences on paper as soon as possible in order to find out what could have been done better. His writings were published after the war.

My father was a professional soldier. In the German Reich prior to 1933, professional soldiers were not allowed either to become involved in politics or to vote. Therefore the soldiers considered themselves as apolitical and thereby not responsible for politics. This principle was a sound one and perfectly acceptable as long as there was democracy in Germany. But after Hitler had become Chancellor of the Reich in 1933 and had received a majority of two-thirds of the votes of the German Reichstag, this principle became fatal. In general, it is worth mentioning that all secondary virtues such as bravery, discipline, loyalty and perseverance only have validity so long as they are used in a good cause. When a positive cause becomes negative, these virtues become questionable. The German army had to experience this bitter truth during Hitler's regime. Hitler's attention was drawn to my father when he read *Infanterie Greift an*. In 1938 he summoned my father and appointed him, in the event of army mobilisation, commander of the *Führerhauptquartier*, an administrative military post to which my father was little suited. However Hitler respected him as a soldier, and in 1940 gave him command of a tank division which played an important role during the German offensive against Anglo-French troops that year. In 1941, my

father was appointed German commander in North Africa. He stayed there, with some interruptions, until March 1943, when Hitler, as a result of my father's pessimistic views on the future of the war so far as Germany was concerned, relieved him from his post.

In spring 1944, my father became supreme commander of the German Army Group B in Northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands. After the Normandy landings, it became clearer by the day that the German troops were going to face an annihilating defeat. In this situation my father decided – if necessary on his own responsibility – to surrender in France when the Allied troops broke through. This he judged the appropriate moment taking into account the men under his command. He wanted to avoid, at all costs, the possibility that in the last phase of the catastrophe Germans might shoot Germans in his area of command. My father also had links with the conspirators in Berlin, but did not think they would be able to achieve a revolution or attempt an attack on Hitler himself. On 17 July, 1944, my father was severely wounded in Normandy during an attack by British low-flying aircraft. When Graf Stauffenberg, on 20 July tried to assassinate Hitler, my father was still ur.conscious. As is well known, Stauffenberg's attempt failed. Hitler set in motion exhaustive investigations amongst the conspirators, and in the process it became known that my father had intended to turn against Hitler. Hitler, therefore, decided to exterminate my father, and this decision was implemented on 14 October, 1944. Two generals, charged by Hitler with this mission, delivered Hitler's 'offer' to our house at Herrlingen near Ulm: that my father should agree to be poisoned. Provided he agreed, he was assured that the customary measures against his family – removal to a concentration camp – would not be taken. Nor would investigations be made about his staff officers. My father, who was convinced that Hitler would never put him on public trial, decided on death. He asked for the favour of ten minutes' respite to say goodbye to my mother, myself and his staff officer. This he was granted. And so we knew how he had to die. Hitler arranged a state funeral for him, and at Hitler's command the NS-Press celebrated my father once more as a war hero, so that those whom Hitler sent into the senseless battles of the last months of the war, could take him as their inspiration.

I very much welcome this new edition of my father's book, which after many years is now available once more for a new generation of those who study military conflict.

MANFRED ROMMEL
Oberbürgmeister
Stuttgart, 1990.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

General Field Marshall Erwin Rommel's *Infanterie Greift an*, of which this is a translation, was published in Germany in 1937, and the first edition in English was published by The Infantry Journal in Washington in 1944. The original translator's note explains that all German units and ranks have been converted into their American equivalents. Similarly all measurements except for the designation of heights have been converted from the metric system. The translator, Lieutenant-Colonel Gustave E. Kiddé of the Coast Artillery Corps, writing in 1943, points out that he was obliged to make his own decisions on some questionable points since 'this translation was not prepared with the author's sanction'!

The associate editor of The Infantry Journal, Major H. A. de Weerd, contributed a foreword to their 1944 edition from which the remainder of this Note is taken. He points out that many such books were published in Germany after the First World War in an effort to find out why they had lost; at the time Rommel was an unknown lieutenant-colonel completing a tour of duty as instructor in infantry tactics at the Dresden Military Academy. Two years earlier he had written a small handbook for platoon and company leaders, *Aufgaben für Zug und Kompanie* (Problems for the Platoon and Company). Neither book made much impression at the time; they received only perfunctory reviews in German military periodicals and were barely mentioned in British or American military journals.

'Five years later, writes Major de Weerd, 'Rommel was directing the Afrika Korps with such success that, according to the Gallup Poll even the British, up until November 1942, considered him the "ablest commander produced by the war". His repeated victories in desert operations against a succession of British commanders caused him to become the most publicized German general. His books, which up to 1941 had sold only a few thousand copies, went through many editions in Germany. ... Most of the general tactical lessons taught by these combat narratives are valid today. The observations under which Rommel sums up his reactions to the various engagements are precisely the counsel an American officer would give his troops and junior officers under similar circumstances.

'As a leader of a small unit in 1914–18, Rommel proved himself to be an aggressive and versatile commander. He had a highly developed

capacity for utilizing terrain. His men were trained to take cover when possible in movement and dig in whenever they stopped. Rommel was tireless in reconnaissance and attributed many of his successes to the fact that he possessed better information about the enemy than they did about him. Information was shared with junior officers, noncoms, and even private soldiers. Into every battle plan and manoeuvre Rommel tried to introduce some element of deception and surprise. He sought out the weakest element in the enemy position and worked out a plan of attack to exploit that weakness and confuse the enemy as to his real intentions. He took pains to insure proper fire plans and used his machine guns and hand grenades in 1916–18 with the same skill that he used his 88s in 1941–42. Rommel was not afraid of changing plans or disobeying an order if he had better local information than his superior officer. He was also good at judging the moment when the cracking enemy should be attacked with every man at his disposal. If necessary he would order his men into the zone of a German barrage in order to give the enemy no rest in retreat. He bluffed Italians and lied to Rumanians in order to get them to surrender in 1917–18, just as he lied to his own troops in November 1941 (saying that Moscow had fallen) in order to get them to make a supreme effort against General Ritchie's offensive.

'The swiftness with which the Afrika Korps switched from armored attack to antitank defense showed that he remembered the lessons of 1914–18. He was constantly making personal reconnaissances in North Africa by station wagon, armored car, or Storch observation plane. His troops called him "the General of the Highway." Instead of sharing his information before battle with subordinates as he did in 1915–18, Rommel broadcast in the clear his instructions and orders by radio in 1942, making use of a map reference called the "thrust line" which enabled him to direct tanks, planes, and motorized infantry amid the fluid conditions of battle. British radio listeners in Lybia often heard Rommel's cool voice directing operations, although without knowing the "thrust line" on which his orders were based they could not understand what he meant or take counter action until too late.

'In 1941–42, acting without air superiority, Rommel repeatedly destroyed British tank units larger than his own by striking them in detail. The Afrika Korps dug in its men and guns and set out its minefields, with astonishing swiftness. It prepared fire plans with great care. This enabled Rommel to lure the bulk of General Ritchie's armor into a tank ambush at Knightsbridge Box on June 13, 1942, where he destroyed most of it.

'For his victories at Knightsbridge and Tobruk in June 1942, he was awarded the rank of Field Marshal. Until his forward momentum was checked in July 1942 at El Alamein, it looked as if Rommel's deception,

speed, and striking power might be too much for the British in the Western Desert.

'The arrival of General Montgomery changed all that. He made a new army out of the British Eighth Army by discipline and training. The arrival of new tanks, guns, and self-propelled weapons turned the scales well against the Germans. Rommel was decisively defeated at El Alamein, driven into a retreat which led across Egypt, Cyrenaica, Lybia, Tripoli, into southern Tunisia. Failing to prevent Montgomery from crossing the Mareth line in March-April 1943, Rommel was recalled to Germany for reasons of health. His successor, Colonel General von Arnim surrendered with the Afrika Korps in the Tunisian débâcle of May 6–13, 1943.

'When Italy collapsed in September 1943, Rommel was placed in command of the Italian and Balkan fronts. Early in 1944 Rommel was placed in charge of the anti-invasion forces in Western Europe. Despite repeated German references to his poor health, Rommel may again prove to be a resourceful and intrepid leader in battle. No commander can afford to take the slightest chance when fighting against Rommel, or offer him even the suggestion of an advantage. He is a tough and resourceful leader, but as General Montgomery has twice clearly proved, he *can be* outgeneraled and outfought.'

FOREWORD

This book describes numerous World War I battles which I experienced as an Infantry officer. Remarks are appended to many descriptions in order to extract worthwhile lessons from the particular operation.

The notes, made directly after combat, will show German youth capable of bearing arms, the unbounded spirit of self-sacrifice and courage with which the German soldier, especially the Infantryman, fought for Germany during the four-and-a-half-year war. The following examples are proof of the tremendous combat powers of the German infantry, even when faced with superior odds in men and equipment; and these sketches are again proof of the superiority of the junior German commander to his enemy counterpart.

Finally, this book should make a contribution towards perpetuating those experiences of the bitter war years; experiences often gained at the cost of great deprivations and bitter sacrifice.

ERWIN ROMMEL
Lieutenant Colonel
1937

Europe, 1914-18

Map from *Infanterie Greift an*

a - The War of Movement: Belgium and Northern France, 1914.
b - Trench Warfare in the Argonne, 1915.
c - Raids in the High Vosges, 1916.
d - Open Warfare in Rumania, 1916-17.
e - Open Warfare in the Carpathians, 1917.
f - The Tolmein Offensive, 1917.
g - Pursuit Across the Tagliamento and Piave Rivers, October 1917 - January 1918.


Reich
Russland
Vesterreich
Ungarn
Rumänien
Serbien
Bulgarien
Türkei
Griechenland

German Raiding Party in French Trenches, 1916.

INFANTRY ATTACKS

PART ONE: THE WAR OF MOVEMENT, BELGIUM AND NORTHERN FRANCE, 1914

Chapter 1

FIGHTING AT BLEID AND DOULCON WOODS

I: The beginning, 1914—Ulm, July 31, 1914

The danger of war hung ominously over the German nation. Everywhere, serious, troubled faces! Unbelievable rumors which spread with the greatest of rapidity filled the air. Since dawn all public bulletin boards had been surrounded. One extra edition of the papers followed the other.

At an early hour the 4th Battery of the 49th Field Artillery Regiment hurried through the old imperial city. *Die Wacht am Rhein* resounded in the narrow streets.

I rode as an infantry lieutenant and platoon commander in the smart Fuchs Battery to which I had been assigned since March. We trotted along in the bright morning sunshine, did our normal exercises, and then returned to our quarters accompanied by an enthusiastic crowd whose numbers ran into thousands.

During the afternoon, while horses were being purchased in the barrack yard, I obtained relief from my assignment. Since the situation appeared most serious, I longed for my own regiment, the King Wilhelm I, to be back with the men whose last two years of training I had supervised in the 7th Company, 124th Infantry (6th Württemberger).

Along with Private Hänle, I hurriedly packed my belongings; and late in the evening we reached Weingarten, our garrison city.

On August 1, 1914, there was much activity in the regimental barracks, the big, old cloister building in Weingarten. Field equipment was being tried on! I reported back to headquarters and greeted the men of the 7th Company whom I was to accompany into the field. All the young faces radiated joy, animation, and anticipation. Is there anything finer than marching against an enemy at the head of such soldiers?

At 1800, regimental inspection. Colonel Haas followed his thorough inspection of the field-gray-clad regiment with a vigorous talk. Just as we fell out, the mobilization order came. Now the decision had been made. The shout of German youths eager for battle rang through the ancient, gray cloister buildings.

The 2d of August, a portentous Sabbath! Regimental divine services were held in the bright sunlight, and in the evening the proud 6th Württemberger Regiment marched out to resounding band music and entrained for Ravensburg. An unending stream of troop trains rolled westward toward the threatened frontier. The regiment left at dusk to the accompaniment of cheers. To my great disappointment I was obliged to remain behind for a few days in order to bring up our reserves. I feared that I was going to miss the first fight.

The trip to the front on August 5, through the beautiful valleys and dells of our native land and amid the cheers of our people, was indescribably beautiful. The troops sang and at every stop were showered with fruit, chocolate, and rolls. Passing through Kornwestheim, I saw my family for a few brief moments.

We crossed the Rhine during the night. Searchlights crisscrossed the sky on the lookout for enemy planes or dirigibles. Our songs had died down. The soldiers slept in all positions. I rode in the locomotive, looking now into the firebox then out into the rustling, whispering, sultry summer's night and wondering what the next few days would bring.

In the evening of August 6 we arrived at Königsmachern near Diedenhofen and were glad to be out of the cramped quarters of the troop train. We marched through Diedenhofen to Ruxweiler. Diedenhofen was not a pretty sight with its dirty streets, houses, and taciturn people. It seemed so different from my home in Swabia.

We continued the march, and at nightfall a torrential downpour set in. Soon there was not a dry stitch of clothing on our bodies, and the water-soaked packs began to weigh heavily. A fine beginning! Occasional shots were heard far in the distance. About midnight our platoon arrived in Ruxweiler without suffering any losses during the six-hour march. The company commander, First Lieutenant Bammert, awaited us. Cramped quarters on straw was our lot.

II. At The Frontier

During the next few days, hard drilling welded our war-strength company together. Besides platoon and company exercises, we were subjected to a wide variety of combat exercises which all placed great emphasis on the use of the spade. In addition, I spent several uneventful rainy days on guard with my platoon in the vicinity of Bollingen. Here some of my men and I suffered stomach disturbances as a result of the greasy food and the freshly baked bread.

On August 18 we began our main advance toward the north. I rode my company commander's second mount. Singing gaily, we crossed

the German—Luxembourg frontier. The people were friendly and brought fruit and drink for the marching troops. We entered Budersberg.

Early on August 19 we moved to the southwest, passed under the cannon of the French fortress at Longwy, and bivouacked at Dahlem. The first battle was near. My stomach gave me a great deal of trouble, and even a chocolate and zwieback diet brought no relief. I would not report sick for I did not want to be looked upon as a shirker.

On August 20 after a hot march we reached Meix-la-Tige in Belgium. The 1st Battalion garrisoned the outpost line and the 2d Battalion provided local security. The population was very reserved and reticent. A few enemy planes appeared and were fired on without result.

III: Reconnaissance in the Direction of Longwy and Preparations for the First Battle

The next day was to be a day of rest. In the early hours of the morning, several fellow officers and I reported to Colonel Haas who ordered each of us to take a five-man reconnaissance detachment past Barancy and Gorcy in the direction of Cosnes near Longwy to ascertain the enemy dispositions and strength. The distance out was eight miles, and to save time we obtained permission to go by wagon as far as the outpost. Our Belgian drayhorse ran away while we were still in Meix-la-Tige, and the upshot was a landing in a manure pile. With only a broken-down wagon to show as a result of our efforts, we continued our way on foot.

Burdened with the responsibility of human life, we moved forward with a greater degree of caution than was normal in peacetime maneuvers. We left the town by means of a ditch along the side of the road. The road wound through grain fields on the way to Barancy which had been reported on the previous day as being occupied by weak enemy forces. On arriving we found it unoccupied; and leaving the highway and passing through grain fields, we crossed the Franco-Belgian frontier, reached the southern edge of the Bois de Mousson, and then descended towards Gorcy. The detachment under Lieutenant Kirn followed us, covering our movement through Gorcy from a hilltop.

On the Gorcy-Cosnes highway, we found signs that enemy infantry and cavalry were moving in the direction of Cosnes. Greater caution was indicated; we moved off the road and continued our march through the heavy growth bordering the road. Maintaining careful observation of the road, we finally reached a clump of woods five hundred yards west of Cosnes. I studied the terrain with field glasses but saw no French troops. On our way across the open fields to Cosnes, we came upon an old woman peacefully at work. She related in German that the French troops had left Cosnes for Longwy an hour before and

that no other troops remained in Cosnes. Would the old woman's story hold water?

We worked our way through grain fields and orchards and entered Cosnes with fixed bayonets, fingers on triggers, and all eyes studying doorways and windows for telltale evidence of an ambush. However, the inhabitants appeared friendly and confirmed the old woman's statement. They brought us food and drink, but we were still distrustful and made them sample the food before helping ourselves.

To speed reporting I seized six bicycles giving quartermaster receipts in return. Using our newly acquired conveyances, we pedaled a mile down the road in the direction of Longwy on whose outer works heavy artillery fire was being laid. Far and wide, nothing was to be seen of enemy troops. The mission of the reconnaissance detachment had now been accomplished. At a fast clip we passed through Gorcy on our way down grade to Barancy. We maintained a considerable interval between men and carried our guns ready for use under our arms. From Barancy on, I went on ahead of my men in order to report quickly.

On the street of Meix-la-Tige, I met the regimental commander and made my report. Tired and hungry, I headed for my quarters, looking forward to a few hours' rest. No such luck. In front of the quarters my battalion was drawn up ready to move. Hänle, efficient as usual, had already packed my belongings and saddled my horse. Before shoving off there was not even enough time for a bite to eat.

We marched to a hill three-quarters of a mile southeast of Saint Léger. The sky was overcast. From the southwest came the sound of rifle and occasional artillery fire. We knew that elements of the 1st Battalion, which were still on outpost duty near Villancourt, had made contact with the enemy during the afternoon.

At nightfall the regiment, less the 1st Battalion, went into bivouac some two miles south of Saint Léger with our security elements about three-quarters of a mile ahead. I was getting ready for a night's sleep when a call came for me to report to the regimental CP located some fifty yards from my platoon bivouac area. Colonel Haas asked whether I would make a trip through the woods to the 1st Battalion at Villancourt. My mission was to give the 1st Battalion the regimental order to retire to Hill 312 by the shortest route possible, and I was appointed battalion guide. (See sketch 1.)

With Sergeant Gölz and two men from the 7th Company, I went on my way. We traveled in the dark by compass through the meadowland southeast of Hill 312. Off to the right we heard our own sentries' challenges, now and then a rifle shot. Soon we were climbing a steep, thickly-wooded slope. From time to time we halted and listened to the noises

of the night. Finally, after a hard climb and feeling our way, we reached the crest of the line of hills west of Villancourt.

To the southeast we could see the glow from Longwy fortress which had been set on fire as a result of the artillery bombardment. We descended through the thick brush toward Villancourt. Suddenly from close at hand a sentry called out: "Halt, who is there?" Was he German or French? We knew that the French often challenged in German. We dropped to the ground. "Give the countersign!" None of us knew it. I called my name and rank—and was recognized. Some 1st Battalion outposts were located on the edge of the woods.

It was not much farther to Villancourt. Five hundred yards south of the town we found companies of the 1st Battalion resting on the side of the Villancourt—Mussy-la-Ville road in close order.

I transmitted the regimental order to the battalion commander, Major Kaufmann. Compliance was not possible, for the 1st Battalion was still attached to the Langer Brigade. I was taken to General Langer's CP, on the hill one-half mile southwest of Villancourt, to give him my message. General Langer ordered me to return to my regiment with the information that he could not spare our 1st Battalion until the remainder of his brigade came up to Villancourt. Downcast at the failure of our mission and physically exhausted, my three companions and I headed back to Hill 312.

It was past midnight when I arrived at the regimental CP. I woke the regimental adjutant, Captain Volter, and reported. Colonel Haas also heard it. He was not greatly pleased and ordered me to go by a round-about way to the 53d Brigade at Saint Léger, either on foot or mounted, and report personally to the brigade commander, General von Moser, that General Langer would not release the 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry. Did I tell my colonel that this job was beyond my strength, that I had been on the go for eighteen hours and was now exhausted? No; although a tough job lay ahead, it had to be done.

I groped my way to the company commander's second mount, tightened the girth and rode off to the north. I found General von Moser in a tent on the hill a short distance southeast of Saint Léger. He was extremely displeased at my report and ordered me to return to Villancourt by way of the regimental CP and inform General Langer that the 1st Battalion of the 124th Regiment had to be under regimental control by daybreak.

I covered a total distance of six miles, part of it on horse and part on foot, delivered my message and got back to Hill 312 as dawn was breaking. All units were ready, rations had been issued and eaten, and the kitchens had pulled out. My orderly, Hänle, helped me out with

a swig from his canteen. Dense, wet fog surrounded us. At the regimental CP, orders were being issued.

Observations: Facing the enemy, the reconnaissance detachment commander becomes conscious of his heavy responsibilities. Every mistake means casualties, perhaps the lives of his men. Therefore any advance must be made with extreme caution and deliberation. Taking advantage of all cover, the detachment should keep off the roads and repeatedly examine the terrain with field glasses. The detachment should be organized in considerable depth. Before crossing open stretches of terrain fire support must be arranged for. In entering a village, advance with part of the unit on the left, the rest on the right of the houses and with fingers on the triggers. Report observations rapidly, for delay lessens the value of any information.

Train in time of peace to maintain direction at night with the aid of a luminous dial compass. Train in difficult, trackless, wooded terrain. War makes extremely heavy demands on the soldier's strength and nerves. For this reason make heavy demands on your men in peacetime exercises.

IV: The Battle of Bleid

About 0500, the 2d Battalion started off for Hill 325 about a mile and a half northeast of Bleid. A thick ground fog lay on the dew-covered fields, limiting visibility to a scant fifty yards. The battalion commander, Major Bader, sent me on ahead to explore the road to Hill 325. Having been on the go for nearly twenty-four hours, I could scarcely stay in the saddle. The terrain on both sides of the country road over which I rode was covered with numerous hedges and fenced-in meadows. With map and compass I found Hill 325; the battalion came up and deployed on the northeast slope.

Soon afterward our advanced security elements on the south and west slope of Hill 325 ran into the enemy in the fog. A brief exchange of shots was heard from several directions. Occasional rifle bullets whined above our heads; what a peculiar sound! An officer who had ridden a few hundred yards in the direction of the enemy was fired on from close range. Riflemen rushed forward and succeeded in bringing down a red-trousered Frenchman and took him prisoner.

Now we heard German commands off to the left and toward the rear: "Half left, march! Increase distances!" A skirmish line suddenly emerged from the fog. It was the right wing of the 1st Battalion. My company commander ordered me to deploy my platoon, make contact with the right of the 1st Battalion, and advance on the southeast of Bleid.

I turned my horse over to Hänle, exchanged my automatic for his